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WASHINGTON AND "CENTINEL X."

By WORTHINGTON CHAUNCEY FORD.

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WASHINGTON AND "CENTINEL X."

[That Washington was in late life sensitive to attacks from anonymous writers in the press is well known, and a rather theatrical account of his rage on one such occasion has come from no less a witness than Jefferson. This sensitiveness was no late development, but is to be met with when Washington was the colonel of the Virginia regiment in 1756. The small body of men then collected for the defence of the colony's frontiers must have been of a stuff to try the temper of the young commander. Enjoying small pay, stationed in a wilderness, expected to cover a territory which could not have been covered by three times their numbers, and subject to little attention from the Governor and Burgesses, it is not strange to find complaints upon the score of discipline as well as on the failure of the troops to do all that was expected of them. Rumors of drunkenness and immorality, of gross neglect of duty, and of a general disregard of military propriety became common, and finally attracted the attention of the Governor. No blame was attached to Washington personally, but he was informed of the rising complaints and admonished. Finally the criticisms culminated in an anonymous communication to the *Virginia Gazette*, signed "Centinel X," and Washington was so touched that he proposed to resign. His leading officers threatened to throw up their commissions, and were only restrained by the soothing promises of the Governor and Burgesses to make a public declaration of confidence in them.

I was unable for many years to discover a copy of "Centinel X," as the *Virginia Gazette* is very rarely found in our collections, and only a few volumes exist in the Virginia State Library. Fortunately, the article was copied into the *Pennsylvania Journal*, and I reproduce it with other and unpublished material bearing upon it. The letter from Richard Bland, though written more than a year before the controversy came to a head, in all probability called out from Washington the statement of facts used in the article attributed to Bland by Washington. I do not know whether this article appeared in any newspaper, and this copy is taken from a manuscript in the Washington Papers. The remonstrance of the officers is obtained from the same source. It is known that Washington sent ten shillings to his brother Augustine, "for publishing an answer to the 10th centinel," but I am unable to trace the answer.]

BLAND TO WASHINGTON.

"WILLIAMSBURG, 7 June, 1755.

"DEAR SIR :

"I have the pleasure of receiving your letter by Mr. Gist; and I assure you I should look upon it as a singular felicity if I could contribute towards perfecting any scheme for the advantage of my country: my endeavors, so far as my influence will reach shall never be wanting. I had the mortification of finding the majority of our House against the most vigorous measures for effectually putting a stop to the French attempts upon our Frontiers: But tho numbers carried it against my opinion, I am not yet convinced that an attack upon Fort Du Quesne, or a lodgment near that place, with a sufficient force so as to keep them in perpetual alarm, is impracticable. This is my favorite scheme, and I should be very glad to hear of its having your approbation.

"We have had a dispute with the Council who flung out our first bill of supply by an equal division of 5 on each side, upon the question being put for a third reading. This strange conduct under our present situation gave our House great resentment. They voted a severe resolve against the Council, & immediately ordered the same bill under a different title to be bro't in, which was passed in two days, and sent again to the Council, who gave their concurrence to it upon more mature consideration, so that you are to have this year 1272 men, including non-commissioned officers to compose your regiment; and I do not at all doubt but you will do everything in your power for the advantage of your country that can be done by so small a force; & I must heartily wish you success in all your undertakings.

"Another bill has passed our House for laying out £5000 in a proper cargo of goods to carry on a trade with the Indians for the public benefit under the direction of Col. Peter & Wm. Randolph, Mr. Cary, Mr. Walker & myself. This bill is now before the Council. If it passes into a law, we shall I believe, engage with Mr. Gist, as Factor, to carry it on: Your recommendation of him will have all proper

weight with me, and I am persuaded with the other trustees and directors.

"As I have some tho'ts of writing an account of our transactions which I desire to communicate to public view in order to wipe off all reflections from my country and the several persons concerned in the conduct of our military enterprizes so far as they can be justified, I shall take it as a particular mark of friendship if at your leisure hours, if you have any, you would send me short heads of such things relative to the French invasion with the dates when they happened as you judge most interesting and proper for such a work. I will speak the truth with boldness, and I hope with approbation from every honest and good man, amongst whom I assure you without flattery, I place you in the first rank.

"I am, dear Sir, your most &c.

"RICHARD BLAND.

"If I have the pleasure of hearing from you, please to direct to me at Jordan's, in Prince George County."

"THE VIRGINIA CENTINEL, NO. X.

"*Quis metus, ó nunquam dolituri, ó semper inertes
Tyrheni, quæ tanta animis ignavia venit?—
Quo ferrum? quidve hæc gerimus tela irrita dextris?
At non in Venerem segnes, nocturnaue bella;
Aut, ubi curva choros indixit tibia Bacchi,
Expectare dapes, et plenæ pocula mensæ,
Hic amor, hoc studium—'* VIR.

"The Profession of Soldiers, Especially at such a Time as this, is not only noble, but benevolent; and worthy at once of universal Honour and Gratitude. They are the Guardians of their Country, and all that is inclined [included?] in that important Word. And therefore, their Merit should not be invidiously depreciated; their Foibles maliciously exaggerated; or their Conduct censured by Chimney corner Politicians, who lie sneaking at Home, in inglorious Ease, and know not their Circumstances, or the Reasons upon

which they Act. While their Character is tolerable, and they in any Measure answer the End of their Profession, their Names should be treated with the utmost Tenderness and Respect.

“ ‘ But Soldiers differ; some will shed their *Blood*.
 And some drink *Bombo* ¹—for their Country’s Good,
 Some in the Field will nobly risque their Lives;
 Some Hero like, will *swear*, or play at *Fives*.
 Some shew themselves the genuine Sons of *Mars*;
 Some brave in *Venus*’ or in *Bacchus*’ Wars
 Can shew their *lecherous* and *drunken* scars.’ } ”

“ No Profession in the World can secure from Contempt and Indignation a Character made up of Vice and Debauchery; and no Man is obliged to treat such a Character as sacred. When raw Novices and Rakes, Spendthrifts and Bankrupts, who have never been used to command, or who have been found insufficient for the Management of their own private affairs, are honoured with Commissions in the Army; when Men are advanced according to Seniority, the Interests and influence of Friends, &c. and not according to Merit; when the common Soldiers are abused, in a fit of Humour or Passion, or through an Ostentation of Authority; and in the mean Time, perhaps, tolerated or connived at, in practices really worthy of Correction; when the Militia Men are brow-beat and discouraged in every noble atchievement, as claiming a Share with the Soldiery in their Monopoly of Honour; when the Officers give their Men an Example of all Manner of Debauchery, Vice and Idleness; when they lie sculking in Forts, and there dissolving in Pleasure, till alarmed by the Approach of the Enemy, who could expect to find them no where else; when instead of searching out the Enemy, way laying and surprising them, obstructing their Marches, and preventing their Incursions, they tempt them by their Security and Laziness, to come in quest of them and attack them in their Fortifications—

¹ This word was more frequently written *bumbo*. It was a liquor composed of rum, sugar, water, and nutmeg.

When this is the Case, how wretchedly helpless must a Nation be? What useless Lumber, what an Encumbrance, is the Soldiery;

"*Conscius ipse de se portat omnia dici.*"

"I would by no Means make the *Event* the Standard by which to judge the Measures taken, though this be undoubtedly the Standard of the Crowd. Successful Rashness will never fail of popular Applause, and unfortunate good Conduct will never escape Censure. But when nothing brave is so much as *attempted*, but very rarely, or by Accident, or for necessary Self defence; when Men whose Profession it is to endure Hardships, and encounter Dangers, cautiously shun them, and suffer their Country to be ravaged in their very Neighbourhood; then, certainly, Censure cannot be silent; nor can the Public receive much Advantage from a Regiment of such dastardly Debauchees.

"Shew me one scar character'd on their skin:

Men's Flesh preserv'd so whole but seldom win.' SHAKES.

"Men of Virtue and true Courage can have no Heart to enlist, and mingle in such a Crowd. And the few of that Character, that may be among them, are in Danger of catching the general Contagion; or of being damped and mortified at the Sight of such Scenes of Vice, Extravagance and Oppression.

"*Horace*, who knew the Estate of the all-conquering *Roman* Army, in the Period of its highest Glory, and most illustrious Victories, will teach us the Discipline proper for Soldiers.

"Our hardy Youth should learn to bear
Sharp Want, to win the warlike Steed,
To hurl the well directed Spear,
With pointed Force, and bid the *Parthian* bleed.
In War's illustrious Dangers bold,
Inur'd to Summer's Heats, and Winter's Cold.'

"But it seems the Delicacy of modern Soldiers cannot bear such hardy Discipline. Their Ease and Pleasure must

not be disturbed by the Fatigues and Dangers of the Field or Woods.

"'Their Country calls; and see! the Heroes run
To save her—if the Game or Dance is done.'

"Luxury and Sensuality have unmanned many an Army, and enslaved or ruined many flourishing Cities and Kingdoms. Let me enumerate a few Instances, for the Warning of surviving Nations.—The first great Empire of the World, viz. the ASSYRIAN, owed its Destruction entirely to the Luxury of its Prince, SARDANAPALUS: an effeminate Creature, that never went out of his Palace; but spent all his Time in the Company of Women. Feasting, rioting, and all manner of sensual Indulgencies were his daily Employ. At Length his Generals cut him off in the Midst of his Debaucheries, and overturned the Empire.—BABYLON, the strongest City, perhaps, that ever was built upon Earth, was taken in the Night by Surprise, while the King, his Wives and Concubines, with a Thousand of his Lords, were carousing in a Debauch, unapprehensive of Danger.—The Overthrow of the PERSIAN Monarchy, and the vast Army of DARIUS, by an Handful of hardy Veterans under ALEXANDER the Great, is another striking instance of the fatal Effects of Luxury.—But who would have thought that ALEXANDER himself, with such an Example before his Eyes, would have split upon this Rock? Yet we are told by JUSTIN, 'That he degenerated into Luxury and Vice of the PERSIANS, whom, by Means of that very Luxury, he had overcome—that he suffered his Army to Debauch themselves in the same manner—that afterwards he gave himself up to the most unkingly Cruelty against his own Friends, one of whom he murdered for expressing himself a little freely concerning his Faults.'—At Length, degenerating into immoderate Intemperance and Drunkenness, he died suddenly in the Midst of a Debauch. A *timely* Death for the World! For had his Life been prolonged, he would soon have become a mere NERO or CALIGULA. Whether he was poisoned by some of his Nobles, whom he had offended by his Cruel-

ties, as some Writers affirm; or whether his Death was the Effect of Drunkenness, as others assert, comes to the same Purpose; that he fell a Sacrifice to his own Luxury and Vice.—The Ruins of TARENTUM are also a Monument of the same melancholy Truth. Having imprudently entered into a war with the ROMANS, which so effeminate a People knew not how to conduct, they called King PYRRHUS to manage it for them; but they soon began to murmur and exclaim against him, because, in Order to qualify them for War, he had established an exact military Discipline, and driven them from their Carousals, to the Fatigues and Dangers of the Field. Some even quitted the City, thinking it to be an intolerable Restraint not to be permitted to live the same idle and voluptuous Life, while they were engaged in War with a powerful Enemy, as they used to indulge themselves in Times of Peace and Prosperity. The War ended in their total Overthrow, as might be expected. The City of the SYBARITES was so populous, as to be able to raise an Army of 300,000 Men. Their Luxury and Dissolution of Manners arrived at an almost incredible Height. They employed themselves in nothing but Banquets, Games, Parties of Pleasure and Carousals. Publick Rewards were bestowed on those, who gave the most magnificent Entertainments; and even to such *Cooks of Genius*, as were best skilled in the important Arts of making Improvements in the dressing of nice Dishes, and inventing new Refinements to tickle the Palate. They carried their Delicacy to the monstrous Length of sending out of the City all manner of noisy Artificers, as Blacksmiths, Carpenters, &c. and all the Cocks, that their downy Slumbers might not be disturbed by any Noise. This unbounded Luxury crumbled them into Factions; and at Length made them an easy Prey to a small Army of the CROTONIANS.—The Application of these Pieces of History is easy; but

“*Periculosæ plenum opus aleæ*
Tracto. — — —’

“L. & V.”

From *The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser*,
November 4, 1756. (William Bradford.)

"OFFICERS OF THE VIRGINIA REGIMENT TO LIEUT. COL^o STEPHEN,
COMMANDANT AT FORT CUMBERLAND, 6 October, 1756.

"SIR,

"To our no small Astonishment we (last night) perus'd a Paper in the Virg^a Gazette intitl'd the Centinel N: X. The Contents of which are so scandalous and altogether so unjust, that we think it a Duty incumbent on us who have the least Regard for our Honor or Reputation to resent such base Treatment in the strictest Manner. Therefore (upon mature Consideration) we have unanimously agreed to apply to you for Redress; firmly declaring (tho at present for the great and just Regard we have for Coll^o Washington and yourself, join'd to the Duty we owe to our King in Defending as much as it is in our Power His Colony of Virginia to which we belong) we do with the greatest exactness obey the Orders of our Superior Officers. But unless we have ample Satisfaction for these so groundless and barb'rous Aspersions, we are one and all (at this Garrison) fully determin'd to present our Commissions to the Governor (as in that Paper it is hinted) [which are?] given to a Reg^t of dastardly Debauchees; and desire that you will inform His Honor we expect that he will provide a Sett of Men for the Service, that will better answer the expectations of Our Countrey and of himself; we say Himself, believing The Printer wou'd never have dar'd to insert such a Paper in His Gazette without His previous knowledge or Consent, in either of which cases He must have believ'd the Censures therein to be just.

"You, Sir, may therefore assure Him, we are resolv'd to obey as Officers no longer than the twentieth day of November next, unless we have as Publick Satisfaction, as the Injury receiv'd. In which Time His Honor may (we imagine) procure GENTLEMEN to do that Duty, a Denomination point blank contrary to that which the Centinel has given US.

"We are heartily sorry to be laid under the necessity of being so free with you but hope the Occasion will be a suf-

ficient excuse for our Behaviour; when you must be sensible of the Abuse not only Put on Us, but the Whole Regiment by this Author, wherein we are charg'd—Laziness, Idleness, Drunkenness and Barbarity w^h all manner of Vice.

"When so far from that it is notorious that Virginia cannot furnish so great a Number of Men, that are more the Reverse A Character we are very Loath to give Ourselves; were We not oblig'd thereto by the circumstances of the present Case, which require that we shou'd justifie Ourselves to the Neighbouring Colonies, amongst whom we make no Doubt we are by this Time become a common Topic of Derision and Ridicule a Favor we are to thank Our Goodly COUNTRY MEN for.

"We are, Sir, with the greatest Respect,

"Your most obedient Humble Servants."

ARTICLE ATTRIBUTED TO BLAND.

"*Quilibet Nantarum victorumque tranquillo Mari gubernare potest; ubi orta sava tempestas est, ac turbato Mari rapitur Vento Navis, tum Viro et gubernatore opus est.*"

LIV. L. 24 N. 8.

"SIR,

"I give you many Thanks for your Observations on the Dispute which is likely to arise between the Virginia Centinel and the Officers of the Forces employed on our Frontiers. But you must permit me to tell you that the Reason you give to persuade me the Centinel has good Grounds for what he advances, appears to me not to carry that Conviction with it, which most Things do, you have been used to communicate to me.

"I do, indeed approve very much of the Centinel's Vigilancy; and am convinced he advances nothing, but what he thinks is right, and for the public Good; but yet, he certainly judges from the appearances of things, and not from the things themselves.

"I confess I have a very good Opinion of most of the Officers: they have given sufficient Proofs of their Resolution in their Country's Cause; and their moral Characters, I must believe are unexceptionable. But opinion shall never

influence my Judgment; I will examine Facts, and from them discover Truths, which the Centinel may not have adventured to; if he had, I am certain, he would have set them forth to the public view in much more proper and lively Colors, than I can pretend to do.

"If what I may say should give Offence to any, for I give you free Liberty to communicate it, tell them, that I have the Honour to be a British Subject, and, under that glorious Character, enjoy the Privileges of an Englishman, one of which is to examine with Freedom, our public Measures, without being liable to the Punishments of French Tyranny; and, if I think proper, to expose those public Errors which have had to[o] long a Course, and which have been blindly embraced by many, as the most true Opinions. Be that as it will, you are my Friend, and in that Quality, I am going to tell you, ingenuously, my Thoughts of the present Conjectures, so far as they concern my dear Country.

"And I pretend to shew you, as clear as the Day, that the unhappy Situation of our public Affairs, is not to be imputed to the Persons, to whom the Executive Power of the Government is committed nor to the Officers appointed to command upon our Frontiers; but that it arises from another Cause; a Cause which I really am unwilling to name; but which the Truth forces me, not to conceal.

"You must excuse me, if I remind you of several Transactions, with which you are acquainted, but which I am obliged to recapitulate, that I may give you a just and honest Resolution to this Controversy.

"And you who are so well acquainted with History, know that from the Reign of Lewis the XIVth., the French have been particularly attentive to gain the Superiority of the English, in North America; and have been constantly flinging men into Canada & Louisiana.

"Some Writers, perhaps of no great Esteem in other Respects, pointed out with a kind of prophetic Spirit, the fatal Consequences of this Conduct to the British Plantations. But they were not regarded; nor was any Notice

taken of the French Designs 'til about three Years ago; when the Governor received a Letter from the Earl of Holderness one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, informing him of these Designs, and giving him particular Instructions how to conduct himself.

"In Consequence of these Instructions, the Governor sent out Major Washington, to discover whether the French had made any Encroachments on this Colony; and, if they had, to desire them to withdraw; and calling the General Assembly, he laid before them the Earl of Holderness's Letter, and demanded from the Burgesses, such Supplies as would enable him to put the Royal Instructions effectually into Execution; but this Information was treated as Chimerical, and without Foundation, and the Burgesses peremptorily refused to grant any supplies.

"Major Washington returned with a Letter from the French commandant, in which he declared, he had taken Possession of the Lands on the Ohio; and was determined to hold them for his Master the French King. The Governor laid this Letter before the Burgesses, and desired with great Earnestness, such Assistance as would enable him to frustrate the Attempts of the French, now become visible, and apparent. But he could obtain only £10,000, which was put under the Direction of a Committee, the Burgesses not being willing to entrust the Administration with the Disposition of it.

"With this Supply, between 3 and 4 hundred men were raised under the command of Colonel Fry; but, upon his Death, the Command was given to Major Washington who was made a Colonel, and conducted the Expedition with Courage and resolution; but, being attacked, on his March, by above 900 French and Indians, he was overborn by Numbers; and tho' he lost the Day, he acquired the Character of a good Officer, and a brave Soldier; and, with the other Officers, received the Public Notice of their Country for their gallant Behaviour.

"This Defeat obliged the Governor to demand fresh Supplies, and the Burgesses granted £20,000, under the Direc-

tion of a Committee. With this Sum about 500 Men were raised, to reinforce General Braddock, who was arrived from England, with a Body of British Troops to the Assistance of the Colony.

"That General, being attacked, by the French, in his Passage over the Monongehala, was defeated. The Virginians in this Action fought like Lions, and behaved with prodigious Valour; they bravely stood the severest Fire from the Enemy; and after the Flight of the British Regulars, brought off the wounded General, who would otherwise have fallen into the most barbarous and savage Hands. Colonel Washington, acted as Aid de Camp to the General, and distinguished himself very remarkably; and with the other Officers, surviving this bloody Carnage, received, a second time peculiar Tokens of Regard from the General Assembly.

"This Defeat flung the whole Colony into the utmost Consternation, which was increased by Parties of the Enemy committing the most cruel and horrid Ravages upon the Frontiers, which were left defenceless by Colonel Dunbar, who retiring with the Remains of the British Troops, made all possible Expedition to get into Winter Quarters.

"And now, that noble Ardour, which ought to have inflamed every breast with Resentment and Indignation against the inhuman Invaders of our Country; that Zeal, which ought to have animated every Patriot Spirit to revenge the Robberies, Plunderings, Massacres, Burnings and Rapes with which the Frontiers were filled, were not to be found. Most Men were agitated with unaccountable Terrors; all Thoughts of an offensive War were laid aside; Fort du Quesne was looked upon as an impregnable Fortress: And no Considerations could prevail with the Majority of the Burgesses to grant more than £40,000 under the same Directions as the former Supplies, for subsisting 1200 Men, to act upon the Defensive only. And so entirely had this Panic taken Possession that the Government was restrained from marching any Part of the Militia or causing them to be marched, more than five miles beyond where the Inhabi-

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tants of this Colony shall be settled on the Western Frontiers. Nor could a Proposition, sent from New York for an Union of the Colonies against the French, which the Governor communicated to the Burgesses, divert them from their favorite system. They refused to be concerned in this Union, and employed their whole Attention to secure the Country on the Eastern side of the Allegany Mountains by a Chain of Forts from Cape Capon to Mayo River.

"From this short Detail of our public Transactions, for the Truth of which I appeal to the Burgesses Journals, and to the Acts that have passed at the several Sessions of the General Assembly since November, 1753, the Cause of the present unhappy Situation of our public Affairs, so far as they concern the French Invasion, may, in my Opinion, be easily discovered.

"In a British Government, where the Laws controul even the Sovereign's Power, it is impossible that military Enterprizes can be carried on with Advantage without a proper Assistance from those who are intrusted with the Disposition of the People's Money. If the Supplies, necessary to give Life and Vigour to our Arms, are refused or granted with too much Frugality, we must never expect to succeed against an Enemy subject to a despotic Prince, who can dispose of the Lives and Fortunes of his Subjects as he pleases.

"The Government was convinced of this, and in order to facilitate the new Scene that was just opening upon us, was desirous to act with Resolution and Magnanimity; but this was not in their Power, without proper Supplies. Supplies were indeed granted, but with so frugal a Hand, and in so peculiar a Manner as not to answer any kind of Purpose.

"Ten thousand Pound was first given to dispossess a politic and powerful People, who were perfecting a favorite Scheme, they had been planning for more than half a Century. This sum was found insufficient and 20,000 pound was granted; but this would not do; the Enemy was too strong and too well secured to be beaten out, by such a trifling supply; then only 40,000 pound could be obtained

to raise 1200 Men, tho' General Braddock had just been beaten with more than twice that number. The Men raised upon this Supply could not restrain the Ravages of the Enemy. Then Forts were thought of, which have proved an ineffectual Barrier against the Enemy, but will be a certain Means [of] impoverish[ing] the People. Thus have we gone on blundering, 'til we are become the Derision of the Enemy, and seem to be sunk in Oblivion, and forgot by our Mother Country.

"The Government cannot be blamed; whoever reads the Speeches to the several General Assemblies since the beginning of these Troubles, must be of this Opinion. I am no Flatterer, and want no favours; but the Truth shall always prevail with me.

"The Officers are as little culpable; what can they do? Are not the greatest Part of the Forces under their Command, composed of the Militia drafted out of the Northern Counties, and are they not restrained from marching more than five miles beyond where the Inhabitants of this Colony shall be settled to the Westward? Can they be compelled to march beyond these Limits? The Law is plain that they cannot, and if the Officers attempt to lead them further, the men may legally refuse to obey. Is it not evident, that as the Inhabitants abandon the Frontiers, and it is well known that they abandon them very fast, the Officers are more and more circumscribed in their Boundaries? Besides the Forts are to be garrisoned, and consider, I beseech you, the Figure 1200 Men must make, dispersed upon so extensive a Frontier as ours is. Nothing in my Opinion can, nothing ought to be expected from the Officers under such a Regulation. The French and their Indians are secured in Forts at a great Distance; those, of them, who commit Such Havock amongst us, are small Parties, sent out, like Wolves from their lurking Dens, and are scarce ever to be met with; when they are, I think, we have no Reason to accuse our Officers of Pusillanimity. In short, can it be possible, that Officers who have, heretofore, behaved with remarkable Courage and Resolution; who have marched over vast

Mountains; supported with invincible Patience, the rudest Fatigues; and shewed the most intrepid Valour in the greatest Dangers, and the warmest Desire to preserve their Country; I say, can these Officers so far forget their Duty and themselves, as to sacrifice that Character, they have so justly acquired; that solid Glory, that results from Noble Actions, to idle Entertainments; extravagant Gaming, and glittering Pageantry. Such a Reflection is too improbable, and too ill-natured to gain Credit even with the most invidious and malevolent; and I am certain it can make no impression on you, who think so justly and are not to be influenced by party Prejudice.

"Thus have I, my Friend, given you my Thoughts upon our public Affairs. The Prospect is gloomy! the Errors great! but I hope, not irretrievable; a Field of Glory is yet open to our View if we will but enter upon it, and play the Men; if we will behave as becomes true Sons of Britain, we may recover our reputation and deliver our Country.

"The Earl of Loudoun, like another Fabius, is watching the Motions of the French to the Northward; and all the Northern Colonies are in Motion to assist him, and shall that Colony which calls itself¹ the most dutiful and loyal, which has been so frequently fired with Resentment and Indignation at the Encroachments and Depredations of the French; and offered the Lives and Fortunes of its People to defend his Majesty's just Rights; shall the Eldest and, I am persuaded, the richest Sister of all the British Colonies, sit supine and negligent; and like a proud Boaster be only big in Words, while her younger Sisters are gaining Laurels in the Field, and Credit and Reputation with their common Sovereign? No, my Friend! let it not be said; but let yours and every Patriot Spirit be roused and really fired with Resentment and Indignation against the cruel Ravages of their Country. Let us not be persuaded, that the French have any Pretence of Title to the Lands which they have

¹ See the addresses of the Houses of Burgesses in answer to the Governors' speeches at the opening of the several General Assemblies from the year 1753.

so unjustly taken possession of; but let us give freely and liberally, such supplies, as will enable the Government to act with Spirit and Resolution, and at least to attack, with Success, Fort Du Quesne; that Source from whence all our present Evils flow. By a vigorous Effort, on this Side early in the Spring, we shall oblige the French to divide their Forces, and thereby give real Assistance to Lord Loudoun, by preventing them from turning their whole Force against him, or, we shall be certain of Success, against that Fort, which will be, to this Colony, an invaluable Acquisition. Let us leave the Government to act as it will; at least, let us try them for one Year; Let us shake off all Diffidence & Suspicion, and take off all Restrictions. Let their Power over the Militia be as extensive as the Service requires, and let them, if they think proper, offend and distress the Enemy. Believe, my Friend, the Operations of War are not to be conducted as common Affairs. Generals and Commanders of armies must be left to act as they find it most expedient for their Country's Interest. These few Observations will, I doubt not, have their proper Weight with you, as they come from your Friend, and what perhaps may have a greater Influence in this Case, one of your Electors. Your good Sense will improve upon them, and, I hope, at your next Meeting we shall hear of nothing, but a laudable Emulation, to discharge your Duty to your King and Dear Bleeding Country, with Honour, Reputation and Disinterestedness.

"I am, very Sincerely,

"Sir,

"Your very affectionate Servant

"PHILO PATRIÆ." ¹

¹ Endorsed by Washington: "Written, it is supposed, by Col^o Rich^d Bland, 1756."



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